1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
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Life History of the Villager

ATTITUDE TOWARD CHILDREN

593 858 [842] The notion of limiting the number of their offspring is quite alien to Hsin Hsing villagers. They greatly desire children and feel that to have none is the saddest thing in life. This attitude is entirely in keeping with the general cultural emphasis on family continuity and care for aged parents which is summed up in the saying, "A husband and wife without children are people without a future." A son is of greater importance and value than a daughter, simply because it is the male who remains with the family and ensures its continuity; his sister's marriage inevitably takes her away from her natal family and ties her future to that of her husband and his kinship group.

Nevertheless, girl children are considered necessary in any household, and the ideal family consists of four or five children, of which two are girls. There are countless chores around the house for which daughters are needed, and today unmarried girls often contribute financially to the family income. Even the daughter's marraige plays an important part in helping to extend the family's relationships with others. When a parent dies, daughters return to mourn and wail at the funeral. As some villagers said, "If you have girls, then they will cry for you on the road one day." In addition, there is little doubt that most parents are sincerely saddened when their daughters marry and leave home. Parents are genuinely devoted to their children, regardless of sex. The children are welcomed and loved and treated equally, especially in early childhood. Even a physically handicapped child receives loving care, and no matter how inadequate the food supply may be, all will share it equally.

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However, under a patrilineal system the boy child is always more desirable, and the parents' love for all their children does not mean that a daughter's ultimate value is considered equal to that of a son. As several villagers said in more or less the same words, "When a

1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
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married couple has no children, they just want a child, be it a boy or a girl, and when they have a boy they want a girl. But if the parents have too many girls, they say they don't want any more girls because too many girls are no use. The difference is that people don't ever say too many boys are no use." These villagers hastily added, "People just say that girls are no use; they don't really mean it or do anything about it. They only adopt out girls [give their daughters for adoption] if their economic condition demands it." It is rare for a boy to be sold or adopted out, and if he is, it is because of direst economic necessity. Although most families do not like to give up a daughter, either, and tend to resist making such a commitment, one of several girl children is often given for adoption under much less urgent financial pressure. The figures for Hsin Hsing show that more girls than boys there are adopted or given for adoption.

Giving up a child for adoption is one way of alleviating economic difficulties perhaps aggravated by too large a family, but the villagers make no attempt to limit the number of children they have in order to forestall such a contingency. Some villagers realize that the tremendous increase in population discussed in Chapter 2 is the reason for the economic conditions which make it difficult to get land or a job, but they give little thought to birth control as a solution. As one informant put it, "Some people do think about birth control, but rural people still want many children. Even if a couple has ten children, if they have another they are still so happy. The villagers just like children. Mr. Shih, who is fifty years old, had another baby son and was so happy. He couldn't expect that boy to support him since he is already so old, but perhaps he feels this son will have many descendants to worship him and carry on the family."

While many village men are aware that there are ways of preventing conception, only a few are familiar with specific methods. Some of the men remember that the Japanese soldiers used condoms during sexual intercourse, but for the most part they thought this was basically a method of disease prevention rather than a contraceptive device. However, some of the younger men who have lived in Taipei and have had premarital or extramarital relations with prostitutes, have thus been informed that the condom can be used as a means of contraception.

Even the villager who is aware of this use of the condom does not find them readily available, and when they are available, they are too expensive for regular use. In general, if a village man feels he has more children than the family can support, he abstains from sexual relations—at least with his wife. On rare occasions he may go for sexual satisfaction to girls in Lukang. Such men usually share a bed with some of their older sons, while the wife sleeps with the younger children.

1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
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The birth takes place in the bedroom of the house, usually with little illumination available. Sometimes only one small electric bulb or a kerosene lamp is lit. In labor and during the birth, the woman seems to be relatively quiet, refraining from cries of pain. This may result from the usual stoicism of Chinese women, who are trained to show as little emotion as possible no matter how great the pain. To have other people hear any cries would be embarrassing, and thus cries are avoided. 844 [373]

A woman must not give birth to a child in her natal home. It is believed that such a birth would bring bad luck to her brothers' wives when they give birth and might even result in their being unable to have children. In one case, the married daughter of a Hsin Hsing landlord family did not get on well with her husband's parents. After a number of years of marriage she returned to live in her parents' home while her husband worked in the city and occasionally visited her. When it came time for her to give birth to her third child, she had to leave her brother's home and go to a hospital to have the baby, a most unusual occurrence in the village. She could not give birth in a neighbor's house, of course, since this might damage the birth prospects of the women of that house. 844 842 784 602

After the birth, according to a custom whose reason and origin are now unknown, the umbilical cord and afterbirth are wrapped in a rag and buried in the river bottom. Anything related to the birth, especially if it has been in contact with the woman's blood, is considered unclean.[1] The very room in which the birth takes place is likewise considered unclean, and anyone who enters the room for a month after the birth cannot then attend a wedding, since this would mean bad luck for the bride. 844 [826]

The baby is fed "sugar water" (sugar boiled in water) immediately after birth and until nursing begins. The baby begins to nurse about the end of the second or third day, when lactation begins. 853

After the birth, the new mother eats with the family at the next regular meal, and there is no change in her meal schedule. The food she eats, however, is special, and often consists of fresh fish, chicken, wine, and other such "good and rich foods." These are felt to encourage the production of milk and, more important, to help the mother regain her strength. These foods are usually gifts sent during the first month by the new mother's brothers and sisters. Neighbors and friends may also send such gifts, and the household of the new mother gives them "oil rice" (fried glutinous rice) in return. 846 262 431

It is felt that the new mother should do as little work as possible and rest frequently during the first month after the birth. If she belongs to a joint or stem family, this period of rest is virtually assured. If, however, the family is small, she must depend upon help from *ch'in tsu*, 846 [596] [612]

the answers given were less equivocal. The majority agreed that the most they could expect was "a cheap coffin," and many felt that even this was setting one's expectations too high, one man replying that "they would just throw you in the river." The norms of the society enjoin a man to support an elderly and destitute relative, but there is little expectation that these norms will be honored. A man's only alternative therefore is to have children who are bound to him by the formal requirements of filial piety and the natural sentiment of the parent child relationship. As a villager explained, "On Taiwan no one asks you how much land you have. Here people ask you how many sons you have. You can work when you are young, but when you are old you have to have children to take care of you."

When asked the most important reason for having children, several villagers insisted that economic security was the only reason. Playing on Mencius's famous dictum, one man told us that "the most unfilial thing a son could do was not to support his parents," and another younger man answered by quoting a proverb to the effect that "it is better to have money in one's pocket than sons in one's house." But like all sarcasm and most wit, these answers only have force as comments on an accepted value. A man must have sons to support him in his old age, and he must provide these sons with wives if he is to expect them to fulfill their obligations as sons, but were old age security his only concern his interest in descendants would end here. As we have seen already, most men do not live long enough even to see their grandchildren marry, and so there is little need for a man to have grandchildren

as insurance against a destitute old age. Yet one of the most compelling concerns of most elderly villagers is "to see their grandchildren before they die." In order to achieve this goal, they often force their sons into early marriages, and, if their son's wives prove barren, they may threaten to repudiate them, or if necessary, even adopt grandchildren. It is a great joy for an elderly man to be able to say that he has many children and grandchildren "to see me to the mountain when I die," and it is the great hope of every grandparent that he will be one of those few whose funeral procession is led by a small child dressed in blue, the mourning color for the deceased's great-grandchildren. Beyond the need to have someone to support you in your old age is the need to have descendants, to die assured that there will be someone to perpetuate the family line. To insure the comfort of one's old age is an important motive for having children, but the full value of children cannot be entirely represented in economic terms. They stand as testimony of a man's having fulfilled his duty to his own parents, and they make secure his own achievements and his claim on the future.

On the altar which stands opposite the main door to every village home are the family's ancestral tablets, small rectangular slips of planed wood, rounded on the top like grave-stones, and inscribed with the posthumous names of the deceased members of the family. Since the family is ideally patrilineal, these typically include the head of the household's father and mother, his father's father and father's mother, and so forth, for as many as five or six generations. The general rule is that a family's tablets will include all of those

fifteen years since Lim Bi-kok destroyed his tablets, his family is still the only family in Hsiachichou which does not make regular offerings to their ancestors.

The relationship between the living and the dead is a reciprocal one. The living are expected to provide the means of support for their ancestors in the next world, and the ancestors are expected to protect and succor their living descendants. Such a conception of man's relationship with his deceased forbears naturally makes it extremely important for a man to produce children. The man who fails to provide descendants to carry on the ancestral rites after his own death fails in his obligations to his parents just as surely as if he had failed to support them in their old age. Just as they needed rice and a comfortable place to live in this life, so they need living descendants who will continue to provide them with the necessities of existence in the next world. Moreover, the man who fails to provide children to insure the ancestor's future risks their loss of support in the business of this life, and may actually suffer various disasters as a result of their anger at his failure. No villager would be surprised by a statistic which reported that illnesses were more common among the children of matrilocal marriages than those of patrilocal marriages. And finally, the man who fails to produce male offspring condemns himself. Without children to make sacrifices to him after his own death, he is doomed to an existence as a "wandering ghost," begging for scraps of food at temple doors. When we asked a number of villagers the meaning of the terms hǒu mi̍: and pāi mi̍:, "good fortune"

842 and "bad fortune," or "good name" and "bad name," many illustrated their answers by pointing to a man with many sons as an example of bŏu miā: and one with no sons as an example of pâi miā:.

593 842 606 Although the ultimate responsibility for providing descendants belongs to the male members of the family, the immediate responsibility rests with those women who are their wives. The fertility symbols with which the marriage ritual is embossed serve to remind the bride that her primary duty to her husband's family is to bear children. Until she has fulfilled this duty she must "walk quietly" in her husband's house. Because of the high cost of marriage, few families in Hsiachichou would even consider repudiating a barren daughter-in-law, but neither would they forgive the daughter-in-law who failed to bear them grandchildren. The mother-in-law will usually take every opportunity to remind her of her failure. To her, the girl's failure is a terrible disappointment, casting a shadow over what were to be the joyous years of her old age. Something of the bitterness which arises in such a situation is apparent in a comment we overheard while talking to a woman whose three children were all adopted. During the course of our conversation, the natural born daughter of the woman's sister-in-law interrupted and was told to go away and "stop being a useless girl." Our informant's mother-in-law happened to be sitting in the same room and took this opportunity to comment, "It doesn't matter very much whether children are boys or girls. What really matters is whether or not a woman bears children."

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Aside from her responsibility to her husband's family, a woman has more personal reasons for wanting to bear children. For one thing, barrenness is the most indelible of all stigmas. Old women who are quarreling will often accuse one another of being barren. It implies not only an abnormal physical state, but also something of a failure of character. To bear children is so important that those who fail to do so must lack some essential moral quality. For another, it is only through her children that a woman can realize her position as a wife. The only common ground between a husband and wife in the early years of their marriage is their children. Often they marry as almost total strangers, and etiquette demands that they remain distant to one another. As the villages women express it, the children "give you something to talk to each other about." Finally, a woman's having any sense of security in her husband's home depends on her having children. Although the average village woman realizes that her husband's parents cannot afford to repudiate her, she also knows that they will never accept her until she provides them with grandchildren. It is by virtue of her children that a woman secures her status as a member of her husband's family. She herself may never become a full fledged member of the family until she dies, but as the mother of the family's male descendants she secures a position of respect. It is nothing to be a wife or a daughter-in-law, but it is a matter of pride to be a mother.

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Beyond those reasons we have already discussed, there are more general, less easily exemplified reasons for having children. One has

only to observe the excited anticipation of the older villagers, both men and women, when the birth of a child is imminent to realize that children have an intrinsic value. An old woman whose sons had not as yet given her grandchildren told us sadly of how quiet her house was, how lacking in noise and bustle. There is no life without children in the house. One also senses living in the village that children give a man a sense of fulfillment, of involvement in something larger than the narrow circle of the present. The young men who say that they will give up ancestor worship "when the old people die," nevertheless think of the family as an unbroken chain that began long ago and that will continue long after they are gone. Not to have children would be to take responsibility for breaking this chain, and, perhaps more important, without children the achievements of this life would lose much of their meaning. If by means of a lifetime of hard work and self denial, a man adds a small plot of land to his family's possessions, it does not appreciably raise his own standard of living, but when the value of the land is multiplied by its benefits to the untold generations that will follow, a man has reason for satisfaction. It is partially for this reason that a person must have children to inherit the property of his fathers. His father calculated the value of the land he acquired in terms of its benefits to his descendants, and if there are no descendants it is then worth no more than the few catties of rice it will yield before the present generation dies. As one of our thoughtful informants put it,

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"Our fathers leave us land, graves to care for, a business. If we do not have children to inherit these things in their turn, then the efforts of our fathers will be meaningless."

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There are, then, many reasons why a family must have children and grandchildren. Without descendants a person faces an old age of loneliness and suffering which will continue into his existence after death. Besides his personal sufferings, he will bring down upon the long line of ancestors who preceded him an existence of homelessness and hunger. Even if he is among those few who question the active existence of a life after death, he will hesitate to assume responsibility for breaking the chain that began long before and could continue long after him. Given the values of the society in which he lives, the achievements of his own life will taste of the futility of last night's pleasures.

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That this concern for social continuity is real is evident in the actual genealogical composition of Hsiachichou in 1960. At that time there were 79 men of thirty years of age or more living in the village, and 93 women of thirty years of age or more. Of these 79 men 6 had never been married, and 6 were married to women who had not as yet born children. Of the 93 women 12 had never been married, and 5 of those who had been married had never borne children. Yet of the 79 men all but 3 had living children or grandchildren, and of the 93 women all had living children or grandchildren. Social continuity is

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of such importance that regardless of the barriers which stand in their way almost every villager manages to provide himself with descendants. It may be by way of adoption, or it may be by claiming his or her

illegitimate offspring, but in one way or another the goal is achieved, indeed, must be achieved. It is therefore obvious that we need not consider as real alternatives any set of choices that would lead to family extinction. Whatever else their goals may be with regard to marriage and adoption, a family must make decisions which will lead to the perpetuation of their line.

nothing less than a small fortune. A go-between acting for some local party could usually get as much as a year's income for a male child, and dealers who bought male children on Taiwan for resale in Amoy would sometimes offer even more. The returns from the sale of a male child would at the very least enable a family to replace a thatch roof with tile, and it might even finance the purchase of a small plot of land or provide the capital for a small business undertaking. Since a family's regular income went almost entirely for food and other daily essentials, it was only by such means that a family might obtain the capital for any major investment. We must also remember that it was not the parents of the child who decided his fate. Most children are born during that phase of the family cycle at which their grandparents are still alive and active, and in the years before 1930 this senior generation had complete and final authority over all decisions concerning marriage and adoption. Although one can understand that a parent with only one male child would be reluctant to sell him for any price, one can imagine that a grandparent with several grandchildren might find it somewhat easier to part with one of his sons' male children.

While there were good reasons for a family to sell one of its male children, there were even more important considerations weighing against such a decision. As we have seen in the last chapter, male children are the focal concern of the Hokkien family. It is by means of his male descendants that a man fulfills his most important responsibilities as son and grandson, and it is with reference to his male offspring that a person calculates the achievement of his own lifetime. If a

*599 family is to have any security in either this life or the next, they
*562 must have children who are obliged to them as heirs and descendants.
• 842 As a result, male children have an absolute value, their worth to
181 their family being something which cannot be estimated in monetary terms. A family may be forced by extreme poverty to sell one or more of their children in order to support themselves and their remaining children, but they would never sell a male as a means of adding to their material possessions. To trade a male child for property would simply not make sense to most people in Hsiachichou, for it is with reference to sons and grandsons that property acquires much of its value. As one of our village informants put it when we asked him why so few people sell their sons, "There is no point in having money or land if you don't have children. Who will inherit these things if you have no sons or grandsons? And who will you have to carry on your family name when you are dead?"

*599 Of 110 male children born into Hsiachichou before 1930 only 8
735 (7 percent) were sold as <u>biēng-liāng-kià</u>:, and in every case the family selling the child was poor by local standards. We know that not one of these families owned land other than their own house site, and so far as their neighbors remember none had any income from a business or trade. Four of the eight children sold were sons of a village woman by the name of Ong Chun-a whose family was probably the poorest in the village. According to Ong Chun-a, "We had to sell those children. We were starving then, and they offered a very good price. Besides, ooo I had to sell my milk to make money." It is interesting to note that

#597 602 involves weighing the relative importance of lineal and collateral kinship ties. The family which gives a child to an agnate naturally strengthens their ties with the adopting family, but they do so by sacrificing a potential tie with the descending generations of their own line. The question which a family must put to itself is this: Are strengthened ties with one's agnates worth the price of an heir and descendant? The answer is no. The frequency of such adoptions in Hsiachichou indicates a clear preference for lineal ties as the more [178] dependable and more significant. Although every family living in Hsiachichou has had agnatic kinsmen who did not produce sons in one generation or another, we find that not one of the 110 males born into the village before 1930 was given out as a kue-páng-kiâ:. The only two such adoptions of which we have any record occurred after 1930, and neither of these are really exceptions to the preference for lineal ties. In both instances a child's grandparents decided to give a childless son one of his brother's male children. These two adoptions were thus made from lineal rather than from a collateral perspective, and did not invole a sacrifice of lineal ties for the sake of collateral ties.

#562 • 342 In speaking of a male infant a village mother will sometimes refer to the child as her pó͘u-pu̍e, her "treasure." The term is never used with reference to female infants, nor is there any female counterpart of the term. The term which one hears repeatedly with reference to female children is the term lia̍u-ci-hu̍e, "something to lose money on." Male children are "treasures" because it is through its male offspring

*562 that a family achieves its most important goal, the perpetuation of its
• 842 line. Female children, on the other hand, are "something to lose money on" because the money invested in raising a female child is lost when she marries. Her children become heirs and descendants of her husband's family, and her labor and skills a contribution to the welfare of her husband and his relatives. Whereas a son will remain with his parents and support them in their old age, the most that can be expected of a daughter is that she will mourn her parents when they die. As a result, most villagers feel that it is imperative to have male children and see little point in raising their female children. As one of our more outspoken informants put it, "There is no point in having daughters if you have sons. Daughters are just things you waste money on. You feed them and take care of them when they are small, and then when they are old enough to help you they marry and belong to someone else."

*583 The family which chooses to raise their female children does, of course, receive a bride price when they marry, "to thank them for raising the girl." While this is often a considerable sum of money, it does not really compensate a family for the expenses incurred in the girl's upbringing. The bride price is usually barely adequate to cover the expenses of the girl's engagement and marriage, and often a family finds that the marriage of a daughter actually costs them money. A marriage in a family invariably involves a number of dinners and teas, and when these are held in the bride's home they are the responsibility of her
[431] family. The family must also provide themselves with new clothes to attend the various festivities, and when they visit the groom's home they

583 584 hand-drawn carts, the contents laid out on sheets of red paper for all to see. The children of the bride's family often spend an entire morning pinning ten dollar bills onto the sheets of red paper to make the usual gift of a thousand dollars cash as impressive as possible. Such a colorful procession naturally collects crowds of curious housewives all along its route, and their shrewd estimates often serve to fix the family's social standing for years to come. As a result, few families attempt to economize on a dowry, if not for their daughter's sake, then at least for their own sake.

593 562 842 We might therefore say that while male children are valued as heirs and descendants, female children are regarded as something on which one stands to lose either money or face. Parents and grandparents may be as personally fond of their female children as they are of their male children, but it is simply not sensible for them to raise a number of their own daughters. If a family is going to raise any female children at all, it is better for them to adopt sîm-pûa than to raise their own daughters. A sîm-pûa can marry a son of the family and bear children who will belong to the family, while a daughter is forbidden by the incest taboo from ever playing such a role. She can only remain a member of her natal family by making a matrilocal marriage, and such marriages are pointless if a family has sons of their own. A wealthy family can, of course, choose to raise both their sons and daughters, but in the years before 1930 people in Hsiachichou were too poor for such luxuries. The cost of raising a daughter might make it difficult for a family to provide for their male children, and it would be

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*597 556 give their daughters out as sīm-pûa. The villagers themselves assume that such a correlation exists, but the limited data that we have do not seem to corroborate their assumption. The few cases for which we have all of the necessary information include several families who gave one daughter out as a sīm-pûa and sold another as a lông-lù. The choice between the two forms of adoption does not seem to have been a very significant one for these families, and so perhaps here again relative wealth is only an important factor when one compares the very wealthy and the very poor.

*597 *562 *121 We are thus able to draw a relatively simple picture of decisions concerning adoption in the years before 1930. Whether or not any particular child was given away in adoption depended primarily upon the child's sex and the composition of the family in which he was born. The prime concern of any family in making decisions about their membership was to have descendants who could care for the adult members of the family in their old age and provide for the continuation of the family into the next generation. A child who was born into an as yet childless family was thus almost never given away in adoption. Of 18 males and 14 females born into childless families only 1 (5 percent) of the males and 4 (22 percent) of the females were given out in adoption. [735] But while every family was very much concerned to have heirs and descendants, all but a very few families were so poor that they could not easily afford to raise all of their offspring. [611] [582] The general preference for patrilineal descent and patrilocal marriage also created among all families a tendency to value their male children much more than [842] their female children.

CHAPTER 11

THE DECISION TO ADOPT

During the past seventy years at least 20 women who married into Hsiachichou had the great misfortune to not bear male children. In 12 of these 20 cases the woman did not bear any children at all, and in the other 8 cases she bore only female children. There have also been a large number of women who married into village families and did not bear any male children until a number of years after their marriage. We can be certain that in every one of these cases the family in question would have liked to adopt a male child. The value of male children is so pervasive in the society that every family without sons will naturally be anxious about the fact, and the most obvious solution to the problem is to adopt a male child. It is also very likely that many of those families with only one male child would likewise have been happy to adopt a boy if the opportunity had been offered. Most people in the village consider it a risk to depend upon only a single son or grandson. One of our informants told us, "You have to have at least two or three sons. If you have only one son, and he isn't good to you, then what can you do? You should have several sons so that if one isn't good to you you can lean on the other."

But while the majority of village families would have been pleased at one time or another to be able to adopt a male child, the fact is that very few families ever have. We find in our genealogical

*597 involved in paying a large sum of money for a child whose loyalty would always be a matter of concern.

The reluctance of most families to buy a male child is also evident in the fact that in 5 of the 8 cases of male adoption in Hsiachichou [842] the family had already adopted at least one female child. It is commonly believed in the village that the adoption of a female child will increase a woman's chances of bearing a male child, it being said that "the girl will lead a boy into the family." We might say that it is only when a family is convinced that they have exhausted both natural and supernatural means that they finally turn to buying a male child. In terms of their alternatives for insuring their future, the family is then in a position of having to adopt a son or arrange a matrilocal marriage for a daughter. When faced with these alternatives some families which can afford to do so run the risk of buying a son, but never before. The only exceptions are those very few cases in which a family is able to adopt a son from an agnate, and the occasional unusual case such as the young man who received a son in adoption as payment for having allowed a sīm-pûà to marry out of the family.

*597 *562 198 The adoption of male children by families living in Hsiachichou is thus very rare. The adoption of female children, on the other hand, is surprisingly common. While only 4 (4 percent) of 112 boys born before 1930 and raised in Hsiachichou were adopted sons, we find that the girls raised in the village before 1930 included more adopted daughters than daughters. Of 113 girls born before 1930 and raised by families living in Hsiachichou 80 (71 percent) were adopted daughters. In more

#599 #583 to adopt a son, but this is often impossible because of the expense. If they are poor and cannot find an agnate willing to give them a boy, they must be satisfied with a daughter and the hope that they will be able to find a good man willing to marry into their family.

#599 #842 When a woman has been married a number of years and not yet borne children and her husband's family then adopts a female child we can be fairly confident that the adoption was made with a matrilocal marriage in mind. But what if the woman has only been married two or three years at the time of the adoption? We find at least 19 women who adopted a female child within the first five years of marriage, and in 8 of these cases the women had been married less than two years. A matrilocal marriage is usually undertaken only as a last resort, and a couple who have been only recently married should not be ready to turn to last resorts. It is likely that they will bear children of their own, and if not they may still be able to arrange to adopt a son. In either case the adoption will not only have been pointless, but will also prove a costly loss to the family. They will then have to marry the adopted daughter out of the family, wasting both the cost of raising her and the expense of her marriage. That we find such a large number of adoptions by women married no more than a few years would seem to indicate that there is some other function which an adopted daughter may play.

Given the normal family cycle, a man's parents will usually be in their mid-forties by the time their sons marry, a stage in life at which they will have begun to think of their grandchildren. It is the joy of every elderly person to have many grandchildren about him in his

declining years, and it is of the utmost importance for a person to see that he will have many sons and grandsons to take him to the mountain when he dies. If, then, the son's wife does not become pregnant within the first year or two of marriage, her husband's parents begin to fear that the girl is barren. Her failure to show signs of pregnancy at the earliest possible time is also inevitably noticed by the family's neighbors, and someone is certain to suggest that this is a punishment visited upon the family for some former misdeed. Such gossip naturally arouses the husband's parents, and further exacerbates their own worries about their daughter-in-law's fertility. The man's mother then begins to chide her daughter-in-law who is already anxious for her own reasons. The result is a state of tension which grows in intensity as the months pass. If it is true that anxiety about fertility serves to make conception less likely, as psychiatric studies have suggested, the chances of the daughter-in-law's bearing children decline as the tension and anxiety around her increase.

If after eighteen or twenty months the girl is still not showing the signs of pregnancy, the family will often consult a shaman or fortune teller. Human fertility is thought of in Hsiachichou in terms of an arboreal analogy. Every woman has a tree with a number of red and white blossoms, the white blossoms representing the number of female children she will bear, and the red the number of male children. Should a woman fail to conceive and bear children it is probably because the tree is dying, the buds withering before they can come to blossom. There can be various reasons for this. It may be that the tree is

842 unhealthy as a result of a lack of nourishment, or it may be that the
755 tree is being attacked by some kind of ghost. If these baneful in-
775 fluences can be counteracted, the tree will flourish and the woman will be fruitful. The remedy in the case of an unhealthy tree is usually to prescribe herbal medicines for the woman, while ghosts are more often dealt with by means of rituals intended to elicit the aid of a benevolent
842 supernatural. One thus finds that the young married woman spends a
755 great deal of time and money seeking the proper herb and the intervention of potent deities. In observing the activities of a local shaman over several months we noted that only physical illness outranked worries about fertility as a reason for a person's seeking his services.

597 If a family tries these various herbal and ritual remedies and
755 their daughter-in-law still does not conceive, a shaman or fortune
842 teller may suggest that they adopt a daughter. As we have already mentioned, it is commonly believed that the adoption of a female child will stimulate a pregnancy. How the villagers rationalize this belief in terms of their own conceptions of physiology and fate we were never able to discover; they simply say that "the girl will lead a boy into the family." But whatever the rationalization, the belief is held with the greatest confidence. Even our more sophisticated informants agreed that the adoption of a female child will improve a woman's chances of bearing a male child. The reason for this confidence is not hard to see. Of a total of 27 village women who adopted their first child 19 (70 percent) did later bear children. One reason for these favorable

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842
755 results may be that the adoption serves to alleviate the anxiety which is partially responsible for the woman's failure to conceive. At least this has been suggested by several studies of adoption and fertility in this country. What is more likely in the case of Hsiachichou, however, is that most of these adoptions occurred before the woman had really tested her ability to conceive. Most village wives are strong healthy young women, and given time they conceive and bear children. While most adoptions do therefore lead to the eventual birth of a child, it is not always for the reason suggested by the shaman. Shamans and psychiatrists share the good fortune of practicing an art in which it is often difficult to separate the results of their good works from the effects of time and patience.

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842 It would thus seem reasonable to assume that many adoptions by childless families were motivated more by anxiety about barrenness than by the intent to arrange a matrilocal marriage. The importance of children in the society gives us reason to assume that any childless couple will be anxious about the fact, and this assumption is confirmed by the amount of money and time spent on ritual and medicinal cures for barrenness. Given then that one of the cures in which most villagers have the greatest confidence involves the adoption of a female child, it would seem reasonable to conclude that many adoptions by childless couples were undertaken in the hope of stimulating a pregnancy. Several village families told us that this was their primary reason for adopting a child, and the timing of the adoptions seems to indicate that similar motives were responsible in a number of other cases. While

there is little reason for a family to adopt a child so soon if they are thinking of using her as a means of bringing a son-in-law into the family, there is every reason to do so if they believe that she can "lead a son into the family." Such confidence is placed in the belief that a number of village families actually adopted two or three female children before finally giving up hope that their daughter-in-law would bear them a son. It is also interesting to note that in several cases such adoptions were arranged by a mother-in-law despite the fact that her daughter-in-law was not in favor of the idea. Apparently it is believed that the good effects of such an adoption can be conveyed to a woman regardless of her desire in the matter.

We have seen in an earlier chapter that a family's decision about the fate of their own female children is in large part a function of the composition of the family. If the analysis we have presented above is correct, the same should be true of a family's decision to adopt a female child. We have argued that there are three reasons for a family's adopting a female child. They might adopt a girl to raise as a wife for a son, as a potential means of bringing a son-in-law into the family, or as a way of improving their own chances of bearing a male child. We should therefore expect to find a very high rate of adoption among families with no children and families with male children, but a low rate of adoption among families with at least one female child but as yet no sons. A childless family would have reason to adopt a girl in the hope that in one way or another she would bring a male into the family, and a family with male children might want to adopt a girl

48 girls entering childless families 18 (38 percent) entered by way of adoption, and of 27 girls entering families with female children but as yet no sons 2 (7 percent) came by way of adoption. The difference is that we now find a relatively low rate of adoption among families with male children. Of a total of 103 girls entering families with at least one male child 12 (12 percent) entered by way of adoption, and 8 of these were girls who were adopted before 1940. Adoptions by families with male children were almost always for the purpose of obtaining a wife for one of their sons, and such adoptions became pointless once it was apparent that very few of them would culminate in a marriage. The rate of adoption among childless families remains high because while there is no point in adopting a girl to raise as a daughter-in-law, it is as important as ever for families to have sons and to make some other provision for the perpetuation of the family if they do not.

Whether or not a family adopts their first child depends primarily on how long it is after marriage that the wife becomes pregnant. The sooner she demonstrates her fertility, the less likely the family is to adopt a daughter. There is, however, one other variable. A family is somewhat more likely to adopt a daughter for the wife of a first born son than for the wife of a later-born son. Whereas we find among 54 first born sons 16 (30 percent) whose first child is an adopted daughter, we find only 6 (17 percent) adopted daughters among the eldest children of 36 later born sons. The reason is simply that the husband's parents are more concerned about a daughter-in-law's fertility before they have grandchildren than after they have grandchildren.

591 They therefore begin to press the wife of a first born son to adopt
842 a daughter much sooner than they do in the case of the wife of a later born son.

597 We have now seen some of the considerations which may cause a family
562 to give away its own children in adoption, and we have also isolated
858 some of the factors which may influence a family to adopt a child.
181 Before turning to our next topic it is worthwhile to pause for a moment to consider the total effect of these considerations upon the flow of male and female children between families. As a consequence of the preference for patrilineal descent and patrilocal marriage, males are highly valued and have a universal utility. It is important for a family to have male children to inherit their property and perpetuate their line, and a male child may play this role in either his natal family or in a foster family. The result is a great demand for male children and at the same time a low rate of male adoption. Many families which do not have sons of their own would like to adopt a male child, but the high value placed upon male children makes this difficult. Relatives are unwilling to surrender their own heirs and descendants and those who are willing to sell male children can ask a price which many families cannot afford. The situation of the male child is thus very much like that of a scarce commodity in a market economy. Insofar as males do change hands, they pass from those who have to sell them to those who can afford to buy them, but most people do not participate in the exchange at all. The great majority of those who want male children cannot afford to buy them, and most of those who have male children are unwilling to sell them.

595 this inauspicious beginning, the union was apparently as happy as most
573
589 village marriages. The man was attacked by a rival gang, and when he died from his wounds, Ong Chun-mui was more sincerely upset than the man's own wife. In her words,

> "The first few months after he died I didn't want to go on living. I spent a lot of time then with my foster mother. He was very good to my family, and I lived with him for a long time. I think that this year I will make a tablet and pai-pai to him on Ching Ming Chieh."

[709]

589 Ng Ong-sueq is another village woman who did not marry. Her
595 eldest child was a girl whom she gave away in adoption, and her three younger children are all sons. The eldest of these three boys was born while she was working as a prostitute in Taipei, and the younger boys were both fathered by an elderly man who has kept her as his mistress for nine or ten years. A wealthy man with a wife and several married sons as well as other mistresses, Ng Ong-sueq's benefactor spends most of his nights in Hsiachichou, usually eating his evening meal with Ng Ong-sueq and her parents and children. Ng Ong-sueq's parents provide the rice and vegetables, and their guest brings the meat. He also gives Ng Ong-sueq NT$1500 a month and buys "lots of candy and other things for the children." What worries Ng Ong-sueq is that this man "is very old now and cannot live very much longer, and I will then have to go out and find another man to support me." [842] In order to prepare for this day Ng.Ong-sueq has had a hysterectomy "because no man would be willing to spend a lot of money to support so many children." Her hope is that her present support will live long enough to put her children through school, which he has apparently

3:Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5
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chapter 5

[P.45]

LIM HUE-LIENG: AN ELDEST SON

Lim Hue-lieng entered this world as the first son of his parents and the first grandchild of his grandparents. His birth was thus almost certainly a matter of great joy in the Lim household. His mother's isolation as a daughter-in-law was now at an end: until a woman bears a male child she is only a provisional member of her husband's household, merely a daughter-in-law; with the birth of a son, she becomes the mother of one of its descendants, a position of prestige and respect. The birth of his first son must also have been a moment of significance for Lim Han-ci. A man with a son becomes a link in the long chain of descent. His struggle with the land for enough to eat takes on new meaning: he will one day be the head of a household, the senior representative of the family, no longer an adult child living under the authority of his father. And if the birth of their first male child is a matter of rejoicing for the child's parents, the birth of their first grandchild is even more of an eventful day in the lives of the child's paternal grandparents. The joy of every elderly Chinese is to spend his declining years in the company of his grandchildren, and it is a matter of great pride for a man to know that he has grandsons as well as sons "to see him to the mountains." They are tangible proof that his line of descent will continue, that offerings will always be laid on his ancestral altar, and that the work of his own life will be multiplied in its benefits. More than anything else, they stand as evidence that these people have done their duty to their own parents and grandparents.

3: Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5
Peihotien

#159 bok's young son, the tiny family tyrant, smiled, and ran off to join a
#596 nearby ball game. Unlike any of his brothers and sisters, Kui-hok
157 openly adores his father. Even the adults are amused by his practice of hoarding any treats that come his way to share with his father. He is shy, particularly with us, but not so shy that he wouldn't occasionally slip his hand into my husband's when they happened to be going in the same direction.

#159 Lim Chui-ieng now uses her older children as substitutes for the
#593 adult friends she has been unable or unwilling to make in the village,
#596 but as infants she did not find the solace in them that many unhappy
#842 wives do. After the first two, she was unable to produce sufficient milk and had to rely on powdered milk and local substitutes such as rice gruel and soy milk. She complains of the work they cause her, and she complains of the bad effect her pregnancies have had on her health. After the birth of Kui-hok, Lim Chieng-cua made an extraordinary suggestion for a Chinese husband. He told his wife to have an hysterectomy, the only means of birth control considered reliable at that time by the Taiwanese. Most men, even men considerably poorer than Lim Chieng-cua, are unwilling to limit the size of their families. The number of sons a man has is a great source of pride. An old man told me, "People here don't ask how much money you have. They ask how many sons you have." Perhaps the fact that Lim Chieng-cua had three sons and was seriously concerned about Taiwan's population problems prompted his suggestion to his wife. And perhaps he was looking at the more personal future of his family. If his three sons as adults could not live in harmony under the leadership of the eldest, their share of the family property would be divided in three portions. A three-way division of Lim Chieng-cua's half of the family estate would make small portions and more sons with even smaller shares would land each of them back close to where old Lim Han-ci had begun. Lim Chieng-cua may also have been worried about his wife's health although to me she looked stronger than most of her neighbors. Perhaps he was just tired of her complaints.

Out of fear, Lim Chui-ieng delayed the operation until after the birth of two more children. Lim Chieng-cua remarked to me once that it would have been a great blessing to everyone if she had gone when
#159 he first suggested it. The fifth child, Bieng-cu, is an ugly, sulky little
596 girl. Her habitual expression is one of barely repressed anger. She has
157 not yet the courage to express her feelings in attacks on her peers so

3: Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5
Peihotien

she resorts to attacks on their possessions, their smaller siblings, or to vicious cursing from a safe distance. She is disliked by most of the village children and finds her only companionship with Tan A-hong's youngest daughter. Chai-ngo is gradually rejecting her as she becomes better acquainted in the village, leaving Bieng-cu to her own devices which consist mainly of tormenting the last born of Lim Chieng-cua's children, Cin-hok. When I left the village, Cin-hok was the four-year-old stereotype of all last-born boys in Chinese families. He acts much younger than his age and takes full advantage of his position. He cries more than any child I have ever known, but his tears can be turned on and off at will. To stop them one need only comply with the demand that started them, and that is exactly what everyone in the family does. What A-bok's young son achieves with insolent charm, Cin-hok gets with long, sullen crying. Both Bieng-cu and Cin-hok are lacking in the family good looks. They resemble neither parent but are square, stocky-looking peasants.

After Cin-hok's birth, Lim Chui-ieng entered a hospital and had an hysterectomy. When she left the hospital she went to her adoptive parents' home and informed them that she never intended to step foot in her husband's house again. I have no idea what plans she had for supporting herself, but after a few weeks her foster brothers told her firmly that she must return to her husband. Even if she believed them far superior to her husband's family, they could not afford to support another man's wife for the rest of her life. Poor Chui-ieng's last attempt to reject her "fate" ran head on into reality. Personally, I question the sincerity of her avowed intention of severing her relations with the Lim family. I am more inclined to believe it was just another attempt to bring trouble and humiliation upon what she considered the unjustifiably proud head of her husband. She returned to him and her children just over a month after her operation.

163 capita income which has been higher than the average for
[434] Asia (1959:367). At an increase near three per cent, it would be highly probable that the positive checks envisioned by Malthus (war, famine, disease) would assume dominance and result in a spiraling death rate simply because of the shortage of sufficient food to support healthy
[842] life. There are strong indications however, that the
[582] negative checks Malthus envisioned (birth control and delayed marriage) are becoming operative. The birth rate has begun to decline rapidly (see Table 2) and the average age at marriage is higher than ever before.

168 Even as late as the early nineteen-sixties, the government had approached birth control with mixed emotions. On the one hand, there was recognition of the man-land relationship and the necessity for enforcing a balance; on the other hand, there was a felt need for a sizeable birth rate to produce soldiers to eventually retake the mainland. Official birth control programs started slowly but currently, clinics are widely available. A government-subsidized clinic in Hsin Tien will insert an Intrauterine Device for Sanlei residents at a cost of $30.00, about one-fourth the charge of a private doctor.

163 Thompson's other assumption of Taiwan as an iso-
434 lated unit is also not supported. Foreign trade is in-
439 creasing and the rate of increase in Per Capita Income is

163
434 greater than the increase in population (K. T. Chen, 1967:
439 98).

163 Sanlei demographic records for 1966 during our
165 study indicate that the village does not deviate much from the total island figures indicated in Table 2. Thirteen births yield a rate of 31.8 and seven deaths, a rate of 11.9, for a combined natural increase of 19.9. This increase, lower than the total island figure of 23.0, is partly due to the larger numbers of old people in the village and also due to the missing people in prime child-
[161] bearing ages. However, the mid-year population of 409, a very small "n," does not really allow for meaningful contrasts, i.e., one more birth would have meant nearly
[842] identical increase rates. Many village women are now prac-
[582] ticing birth control and the average age at marriage is also creeping upwards, both factors contributing to the trend to a smaller rate of natural increase.

Social Organization

128 Chapters IV through VI are devoted to selected aspects of social organization: formal organization and social control, kinship, and voluntary organization. A brief summary of the three chapters is presented below in order to set the stage in a general way both for this overview and to make each chapter fit into the context of the whole.

511 There is little doubt that the villages appear quite prosperous and people are not afraid to spend money.

Health and Sanitation

743 As stated previously, there has been a tremendous
744 decrease in the death rate. No small part of this decrease is due to improved health care, both personal care and public health facilities. With the help of the J.C.R.R. (Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction), a health station serving the village has been established in Hsin Tien. This station provides assistance in pregnancy and birth control as well as some treatment of disease and
[842] injury. It will also provide and insert Intrauterine Devices (I.U.D.) at a cost of $30.00, a day's pay for a woman. However, Sanlei village women prefer a private hospital, also in Hsin Tien, which charges $120.00. The latter center provides more privacy and personal attention and also guarantees to refund the fee if there is rejection of the device or provide treatment without charge in the event of bleeding.

744 There are also educational programs to stimulate intensive village health and sanitation practices. However, sanitation techniques in the village are not always in accord with knowledge. For example, all village adults know that the water should be boiled for ten minutes before drinking it. However, although almost no one drinks

511 talked to the township office about its acquisition.

842 Although both Liao Kao-mu and his mother are upset, his wife is currently employing an Intrauterine Device in order to prevent pregnancy. Liao wants another child or two, at least one boy, but as he says, there is not much one can do about it. His wife says she will probably have another child when the baby of the family is about three or four years old.

511 [383] [592] A third contrast is with the family of Lin An-hwei, a Mainlander who is an adopted-in husband. In his home are his wife, her parents, and his four children. He is 511 463 a skilled dynamiter in the mine and earns $100.00 per day 465 or an average of about $2,600.00 per month which would be sufficient to put the family in the middle status group in the village if Lin were not a Mainlander. He does no farming but does help around the house by tending the children. His wife has a small vegetable garden (about 20 feet square) for the kitchen and also works as a laborer picking tea and weeding and earns about $5,000.00 [434] per year. The family income totals over $31,000.00 each year.

511 However, the family is deeply in debt because the 736 two old parents are nearly blind and have recently had heavy medical expenses. The current situation in this family illustrates the previously discussed problem of the high dependency ratio in the village. Four small children

584 554 183 123 Careful collection of data is necessary in obtaining marriage rates by types for there is a tendency to disguise the latter two types as if they were the highly rated arranged form. One man in Sanlei once told me he had an "arranged marriage" and did not see his bride until the wedding. I later learned he and his wife were from the same village, they grew up in homes only 100 feet apart, and both played on the same school tag-ball team. (For discussion of marriage events, see Chapter VIII.)

Incorporation of the Bride

593 851 Marriage does not make the bride a full-fledged member of her new family for a wife attains a status in her husband's home only through her children, especially sons (C. K. Yang, 1959a:89). This value, true for much of China, has been clearly expressed by Fei:

> . . . the legal act of marriage, although preceding the birth of a child, always anticipates the realization of parenthood . . . the full status of a woman is acquired after the birth of a child. Similarly, the affinal relation remains impotent unless a child is born . . . (1939:30).

This is also true in Sanlei, a wife is not fully incorporated into her husband's chia until after she has a child. As will be discussed later, an adopted child may be substituted for a natural child. In spite of the fact that the literature suggests that barren women could be divorced (Lang, 1946:40), no one in Sanlei had ever heard of it happening.

597 represents a loss of a village girl for no one in Sanlei has a servant.

584 597 In order to eventually allow for a siaosiv marriage, a family frequently gives up a natural daughter in adoption and immediately brings in an adopted girl, i.e., if a woman with a son age five or so has a baby daughter, she can give her out for adoption and replace her with an adopted daughter. The expenses of raising children is equal whether natural or adopted. However, when the children are mature, with adoption and a siaosiv marriage, there is only one marriage to arrange instead of two and the larger expenses of the groom's parents for a regular marriage are avoided.

There is a greater stigma attached to giving up a girl in adoption to a family which has no son as a potential future mate than to one with a son. If the family has a son, people claim it might be something like an arranged marriage, but if there is no son, it can only be considered the same as selling the girl. Most girls from proper Sanlei families who are adopted out go to families with sons of appropriate ages (discussed in a later section).

597 562 842 Other reasons for adopting daughters are suggested. Because a woman gains status in her husband's home through her children and since an adopted daughter is legally and morally the equivalent of a natural daughter, a fast means of incorporation is provided. A new wife can significantly

597 improve her position in an extended household soon after
562 marriage by adopting a daughter rather than waiting for
842 a child to be born. This reason for adoption is not frequent but does demonstrate a significant factor with regard to the role of women. There was only one case in Sanlei, one in Erhlei, and two in T'oulei but several people discussed it specifically and generally. It tends to occur only when the woman has a "strong personality," has earned money working outside the village before marriage, and is married at an age two to five years beyond the median age. These conditions suggest that the practice may be an attempt to minimize the status loss for such a woman upon marriage.

597 A second additional reason for the adoption of
769 daughters is related to the mechanism of the adopted-in husband marriage discussed in an earlier section. A family without children would be incapable of meeting the injunction that there be descendants to carry on worship of ancestors. Because of the high death rate, a family with only one or two children is also in a precarious position. According to Hsu and true for Sanlei as well as most of China:

> The desire for male descendants is intense. In local usage this is to insure the continuation of smoke from the incense at ancestral shrines. To perpetuate this smoke insures the continuation (1967:75).

The Desire for Children

181 842 769 715

The following expression of the Confucian design for living is still significant after 2000 years: "Of the offenses against filial piety, lacking descendants is the worst" (Hsu, 1963:29). Barrenness is not only contrary to duty to one's ancestors, but a man without offspring to worship his soul after death may become a wandering spirit or be confined to one of the many hells. Additionally, social security is essentially provided by one's children and moreover, children are a source of prestige and a means of validating one's position in the community. It would be very rare for a childless man to fill an official position or play any significant leadership role in the community. A woman gains full status and membership in her husband's family through her children. There is a culturally provided escape for the biologically barren: an adopted child is the equivalent of a natural child.

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The pressure for descendants has other concomitant effects. A family without natural children is nearly forced to adopt one or more by community pressure even if they had no real personal desire of their own although the cultural values and logic of security mean the latter would be unlikely. Almost every woman gets married as there are few acceptable alternative roles for women outside of marriage. In the rare case of a woman who never marries, i.e., some prostitutes, or in the case of widowhood before bearing

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581 children, an adoption is still likely in order to provide
842 security in old age. Historically, Taiwan has had a high
597 sex ratio (Barclay, 1954:212) and nearly all females were able to marry; the rate exceeded 99% married every year since 1905 for women over 40. However, some men were necessarily without mates; never-married men over 40 always exceeded 4% for the same period (Barclay, 1954:211). Most men who never marry have some kind of social defect such as poverty or a drinking problem but many of these men also adopt children such as the two never-married men in Sanlei with adopted children.

842 Martin Yang reports that the number of children de-
178 sired in the "ideal" family for Taiwan has been decreasing
183 over time (1962:69). This finding is not based on a longi-
125 tudinal study but on a comparative study using respondents in different generations. Interviews in Sanlei village support his findings. However, all attempts to simulate longitudinal studies by assuming an age range suffer the same obvious defects. For example, if Sanlei women beyond child-bearing ages are divided into two groups, those who bore more than four children and those who bore less, there is a strong positive correlation between the actual size of
183 a woman's family and her report of an "ideal" size. For
178 young married women, it is possible that the attitude may
842 change in time, i.e., her desires and expectancies may become congruent with her real situation. Nevertheless, the number of children desired for an "ideal" family is

significantly less for each ten-year age cohort. It is interesting that men's reports are nearly identical to their wives and both sexes agree that women are predominantly in control of the eventual family size.

The typical desired family size among women of childbearing ages (and their respective husbands) is now four or five with no one listing less than three and only three women and five men, more than six. The pair who desired the largest number was a married couple with ten children who both wanted twelve. In spite of the reported bias towards males, if the number is even, the desire is usually for an equal number of males and females, but if the desired number is odd, males are nearly always expected to constitute a majority of one. Only a few very old men reported a desire for nearly all males but everyone agrees that if a couple have only one child, he should be male.

These reports from Sanlei should not be construed such that there is not a strong preference for males. Rather, the preference is not as strong as has been suggested in some of the literature (see Chapter X). Almost everyone desires a male for the first child and a family with all boys will be viewed by neighbors as fortunate while a family with all girls is something to be pitied, but not as much as a family with no children at all. After a string of girls, a family may name the last as "our last daughter" in hope of breaking the chain of misfortune. There is no corresponding practice for a string of boys.

842 Almost everyone agrees that a couple should have the first child as soon after marriage as possible and I found no married childless couples employing birth control measures. It is proper to continue having children until the 833 first grand-child is born. Although it is expected that 842 intercourse will continue as long as physically possible, a couple who continues to have children after they have become grandparents will experience much ridicule.

Pregnancy and Birth

843 Pregnancy and birth are periods of anxiety in every 844 society for they are physically dangerous for mother and child alike since either may die. There may be a spontaneous abortion or defective children may be born. Consequently, almost everywhere, special ritual is required with respect to various aspects of the period of pregnancy.

Seemingly, in Sanlei, some of the ritual or belief is supported by modern medical discoveries, i.e., certain food requirements such as increased consumption of meat and eggs for expectant mothers is medically sound. The origins of other customs are lost in antiquity. It has been posited in another context that certain proximate events were often interpreted to have spurious causal connections (Carroll, 1963:5). In any case, there is a great host of Chinese beliefs connected with pregnancy and birth with attendant rituals and avoidances which are exceeded in number only by those related to death.

843 chung hsi (good counteracts good) means that either the mother or the newlyweds will likely suffer harm. There are many other such strictures but almost any lapses may be counteracted by the activities of a shaman.

[842] As previously stated, it is hoped the first child will be a boy and boys will continue to be desired following the first child until the desired number is acquired. There are rituals to change the sex of the unborn child from female to male, some performed by the family and others by specialists, but villagers do not believe them very effective. It is also possible to detect the sex by various means such as computations involving the mother's age and month of conception.

844 Most births in the village are attended by a local unlicensed midwife with the assistance of a few older women while men are excluded. A woman should not make much noise during birth as everyone lives crowded together and loud [843] crying or screaming would be disturbing. Herbs have been consumed monthly commencing the third month with more added as the expected delivery date nears. Women give birth while lying down on their backs.

The new baby is wiped with sesame oil and a cloth soaked in salt water is used to clean his mouth followed by sugar water. Eye drops are irregularly used, increasing now in frequency but still only half the time for they cost extra. The baby is wrapped in a cloth and placed next to

864 within hearing distance although someone will occasionally
864 shush them. During the wedding party in front of all the
842 guests and children too, the bride is given a flower to
585 hold, the name of which has exactly the same sound as the common term for penis, for the purpose of helping to produce male offspring. Earthy remarks though resound softly throughout the audience such as, "Do you think it is too big?" "Have you ever squeezed one before?" or "That's not the only one you will get today" (See Glossary C).

833 Sexual intercourse is a natural function, to be enjoyed by men and women alike. It is recognized that there may be differences in a married pair's respective sexual appetites and an agreement that it is the responsibility of each to provide for the other. Male appetites are large at marriage but women usually take time to develop them, not reaching a peak until after age 30. Females are quite shy and rarely initiate sexual intercourse until married quite a while although there are exceptions.

Sexual intercourse is only properly performed in bed at night after dark, preferably at midnight, by a married couple who are seldom fully unclothed. The children sharing the bed should be asleep, checked by pinching them. Children learn to face away from the center of the bed and lie still for it is not proper for anyone to acknowledge that intercourse has taken place although with the crowded houses and the walls reaching neither floor nor ceiling, everyone can hear the creaking beds and distinctive sounds

833 of sex. Sexual foreplay includes nibbling, blowing, and
[812] manipulation of erogenous zones. The only common position is the classical "man on top." Intercourse continues while physically possible but the frequency declines with age.

837 There are a few women whose husbands are unable to satisfy them. Currently, there are three such women in the village who have assignations regularly with other village men, two with a regular partner, while the third is insatiable. People say her husband is impotent. If the latter woman has relationships with any reasonably happy married man, his wife gets very angry as has happened several times and once there was a hair-pulling and scratching fight. Illicit sex within the village is usually in the mountain fields and almost never in a village house.

837 Although men in some Taiwanese villages frequent the
548 wine houses[4] in the city (Wolf, 1965), this characteristic
184 is absent in Sanlei. One man in Erhlei is a habitue how-
[275] ever and everyone knows about it but most of the criticism directed at him is not on a moral basis; rather, he is considered foolish for wasting his money. A few li girls who have become prostitutes in town return for visits and festivals but do not practice their trade in the village. They are not morally condemned and are welcomed at all li affairs.

842 Old methods of birth control included the use of herbal solutions by women and coitus interruptus by men

842 neither of which was extremely effective. Recently, there has been much use of "Inter-Uterine Devices" for they prove fairly effective and only a few women experience difficulties with them. Although available at a public health clinic in Hsin Tien, village women prefer a much more expensive private hospital. Women alone decide when they will use an I.U.D. although their husbands may put up a vigorous argument. Only rarely will a woman use the I.U.D. before she has borne three children although if she does decide earlier, no one can do anything about it. Older people, men and women alike, often say the young women are lazy today, they cannot be bothered with many babies. In fact, a major reason for many babies was the high death rate and thus, the necessity for many to assure raising some to maturity, but with the increasing life expectancy and improved diet and health care, the odds of success have significantly changed.

Birthdays

527 561 After the first birthday, the next birthday of any importance which is celebrated with a party is the thirtieth although others may be recognized in the family with special food such as an egg. The thirtieth is for a married male with children and given by his wife's parents while the reverse is less frequently provided for a woman by her husband's family. In either case, it is a small party but with rich food. Most birthdays continue unrecognized, but

known and unknown ones as well as ancestors in general and any ghosts who happen to be wandering around. There is a common Chinese belief that any unworshipped souls may cause much mischief. In Talei Li, it is felt that there are more hungry ghosts today than ever in history because of the many Mainland soldiers who are now slowly dying off without leaving descendants to carry on their worship. Once again, food sacrifices are very important with pork and fruit featured in particular. Some food is left out over night on the street so that any passing ghost may serve himself.

The Moon Festival or Mid-Autumn Festival falls on the fifteenth day of the eighth month as does the birthday of T'u Ti Kung (the Earth God). As part of the worship affairs in the afternoon before dinner, about sixty per cent of village households offer sacrifices at the small Earth God Temple at the edge of the village. There are also special sacrifices to Tai-yin (Goddess of the Moon) and the majority of the villagers stay up late at night to observe the moon for legend claims that the moon is more beautiful this night than during any other time of the year. Special yueh ping (moon cakes) are sacrificed and given to friends and relatives as gifts. The Moon Festival is a yin event (the female end of the yin-yang dichotomy previously discussed) and therefore, features special activities by women in order that they may conceive, obtain a husband, or receive long life. In Talei Li, gifts are also sent on this day to the li school teachers.